



## Rhonda

My name is Rhonda. I'm 58 and the mother of two beautiful teens. I've lived in Brooklyn for almost all my life. It's here that I got married and started a family.

# Rhonda

I found out I had HIV last year after my husband ended up in the hospital in critical condition. He never left the hospital. The doctors told me that I needed to get tested for HIV. It came back positive. I've been in shock ever since. I block out everything when I hear someone say HIV or AIDS.

The doctors tell me I need to begin HIV medications. I'll always remember how sick my husband was when he went to the hospital and I don't want to go through that. And I need to be there for my children. I'm scared, but I met a woman in the clinic waiting room the other day and she told me that she's doing fine with her meds. She looked great.

I need to get rid of my fears. I need to learn more about the medications. I don't want to leave my children alone.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Pedro

My name is Pedro, but my friends call me Pete. I was born and raised in the South Bronx by very religious parents. They thought all homosexuals were going to hell, so I never told them I was gay.

# Pedro

I tried having sex with women, but never really liked it. I didn't use condoms with any of them but luckily none of them ever got pregnant.

Up until recently I haven't used condoms with men either. I'm a top, so I thought I couldn't get HIV. But I just found out that a couple of my friends who are tops tested positive.

That turned my world upside down. I thought that only bottoms could get HIV. I guess I've been playing Russian roulette. I've stopped having sex and I'm stressed. The more I learn about this, the more I find out how foolish I was. I never even thought about sexually transmitted diseases.

I'm 54...what if I tested positive? I'm not sure how I would react, but I know that I need to find out. I need to learn how to protect myself.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Marcel

My name is Marcel and I'm 67. I moved to Brooklyn from South Carolina when I was in my twenties. Back then I was reckless and didn't think about my health much. Condoms and HIV were just not a part of my life.

# Marcel

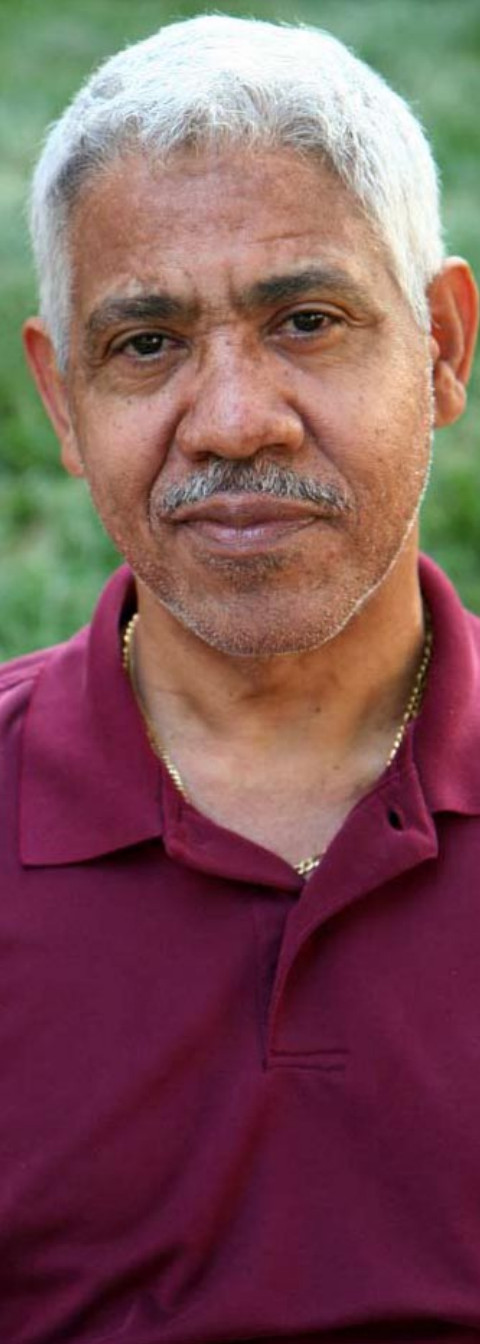
Women were easy to get and so were the drugs. I abused both. Hell, I was in New York City!

I live a much calmer life now and live at a senior residence. I haven't done drugs in a while, but having sex is one thing that has never "calmed down" for me. A few months ago I learned that a young lady that was "friendly" with a few of the guys here died. The rumor is that she had AIDS. She looked so healthy!

Reality has hit me hard. Imagine that – in my 60s and worried about HIV. As if I didn't have enough health stuff to worry about. I need to talk to someone about this – otherwise, I'll go crazy. But who do I talk to? My doctor just gives me my prescriptions – he's never even asked me about any girlfriends. He's going to be surprised when I tell him about that young lady.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Felipe

My name is Felipe, but people call me “Negrito.” I’m 59 years old and was born in Venezuela. I managed to get across the U.S. border with help from friends. I was 29 at the time and knew I was breaking the law, but I had to get away from everything that was going on in my country.

# Felipe

It didn't take long for me to get involved with the wrong crowd. I spent most of my money shooting up coke, drinking, and having wild sex with men and women. I come from a Catholic family, and we never discussed sex or condoms. I made the sign of the cross each time I had sex without condoms. I told myself that would keep me safe, but deep down I knew it wasn't true

Last year one of my friends challenged me to change my life and get tested for HIV. He said I was living too wild and needed to know what was up. I eventually tested and it came back positive. Luckily, I was able to get health care and some legal advice.

I don't want to go back to the crazy stuff I was doing, I'm learning how to protect myself and my partners, and guess what? I learned I can have just as much fun using condoms.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Clara

My name is Clara. I have three adult children and eight grandkids. I got married to my childhood sweetheart at 17 and was with only him for 47 years. I think I look great for my age – people usually don't believe I'm 67.

# Clara

After my husband died a couple of years ago, I began to feel lonely. My children told me there was a senior center nearby with some activities I might like and people my age. After giving it some thought, I decided to go.

A few months ago I met José, who swept me off my feet. No sex – just dating for now – but I know we’re headed that way. I know he’s dated a few of the ladies at the center.

I attended a health workshop and the topic was HIV. I didn’t know people my age got it, but they do. I think I need to be ready, in case we have sex. I need to get condoms, and get tested. We need to make sure we’re both OK.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Nelly

My name is Nelly. I'm 63 years old and have lived in Brooklyn since I was small girl. About ten years ago I found my husband passed out in the kitchen with a needle in his arm.

# Nelly

He never told me he messed with any drugs or needles. He lied to me.

After that, I decided not to have sex with him ever again. I asked him to leave, so he moved out and found another lady. When he died last year, I found out he had HIV. I was scared, but I went to my doctor to get tested. But he told me I was fine and not to worry. It wasn't until I ended up in the Emergency Room with pneumonia that he finally asked for an HIV test. It came back positive. I wasn't shocked, but I had this deep feeling of betrayal, even after all those years.

I've since joined a healing circle for older women living with HIV and I'm learning how to protect myself. I haven't had sex for the past few months, but I hope one day to date a man who appreciates me for me.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Brenda

My name is Brenda. I'm a 59-year-old grandmother living in Harlem. Some years ago, I met a man who I thought was wonderful. We were both doing drugs – in fact that's how we met.

# Brenda

Everything about him felt so right. We decided to move to Connecticut and got jobs, but were still using and sharing works.

He got very sick, and before he died he told me that he had AIDS and that he was gay. So I tested for HIV and it came back positive. I ran back to NYC where I fell back into the same lifestyle – couldn't stay clean.

Soon after I moved back, my son got sick and died from sickle cell anemia. It was tragedy after tragedy. I felt like I was being punished, but then some good news came. My daughter-in-law was pregnant. The hope of a grandchild is pushing me to change. I'm trying very hard not to think about drugs because I want to see my granddaughter grow up.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Maria

My name is Maria. I'm a 56 year old Latina, originally from Guatemala. I moved to Jackson Heights from Chicago a year ago, trying to get my kids away from my abusive husband.

# Maria

He and I weren't getting along – he was in and out of prison, mostly because of his drinking, drug use, and violent behavior.

Three years before I left him, I began to get sick and went to a free health clinic. I was told at different times that I had gonorrhea, yeast infections, and herpes, but no one ever mentioned the HIV test. My husband never wanted to get tested for anything.

Lately, I've been feeling tired and I get fevers and night sweats. The last time I was at the clinic, I told the counselor about how my husband abused me, and about his drug problem. He suggested that I get an HIV test and said that I could have been at risk. I got scared – what would happen if I tested positive? Would I be sent back to my country? I said I didn't want the test.

I've been told I can get treatment and care, regardless of how I got here, but I'm frightened.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Yolanda

My name is Yolanda. I'm 50 years old, Mexican, and I live in Jackson Heights. I was born male but I always felt like a woman, so I began making the change to female in my early 20s. I work on Roosevelt Avenue between 75th and 85th streets because I love the Latino bars and clubs in the area – I get most of my clients from those places.

# Yolanda

I try using condoms with my clients but I usually get more money when I don't. Things are not easy on the streets and I need the money! So I often do things that aren't safe. But I always check my clients and if they look sick or have something strange I won't hook up with them. I trust my gut – I've been doing this for years and, knock on wood, I'm still okay!

A couple of weeks ago, I noticed some strange white stuff on my tongue. One of my girlfriends told me that a friend of hers who has HIV had the same stuff in her mouth. She told me about this HIV testing van that comes by on Fridays that would check me out for free.

The white stuff on my tongue has gotten worse, so I'm gonna stop by the mobile van. I hear they do HIV testing there. I'll get tested next Friday – I hope my best friend Betsy will come with me.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Evelyn

I'm Evelyn. I'm 60 years and I live in Brownsville, Brooklyn. I hang out with my lesbian friends at the Tilden projects. We love to stay up late and most nights we party at my friend Leticia's apartment.

We have some great parties. Sometimes we get up in the morning and have no idea what we did the night before!

# Evelyn

Some of us shoot heroin, but we know each other very well so I always thought it was okay to share needles. I thought none of us had HIV or hepatitis.

Boy, I was wrong! A couple of days ago one of my girlfriends told me that Lisa tested positive for hepatitis C. I was shocked! She's been partying with us for so many years. I knew then that I had put myself at risk.

I love my friends, but I don't want to get hepatitis or HIV. So I asked around about how to stay safe, and it all came down to using new needles. I found out you can get new needles at many places in the city, like the Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center. I went to check them out and they told me I could bring my used needles and exchange them for clean ones. Next time I party I'll have clean needles for me and my girlfriends.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Martica

I've been called Martica since I was a little girl back in Colombia. Now I'm 61 years old and living in Long Island City with my daughter. I love my neighborhood! I am right off the 7 train on 46th Street. I moved to the U.S. six years ago after my husband died. You know, I was a virgin when I got married and only had sex with him. We never had to use those little rubber things called condoms.

# Martica

Several weeks ago my daughter's best friend introduced me to his father, Salvador. He's divorced and very handsome. We began to talk and connected right away. We've seen each other a lot since then and I think I may be falling for him. But I have no experience in dating – I never thought about that after my husband passed.

The other day Salvador took me to a party at the Jackson Heights Senior Center. Right away, he began flirting with the women there. He even told me he'd had sex with some of them! He said not to worry – at our age we don't have to be concerned about catching anything, and besides, he is with me now.

But I was worried, so I talked to my daughter. It wasn't easy at first, because I was embarrassed. She talked to me about condoms and showed me how to use one. Now that I know how to use them I need to get up the nerve to talk to Salvador about using them. I'm learning more about safe sex from my daughter – and how to talk to Salvador about it.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



# Lamont

I'm Lamont. I'm 64 and live in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. I love to walk by Flatbush Avenue and hang around the Botanical Garden. It's one of my favorite cruising spots – only the library is better. I retired from my job as an art teacher a few years back and have been dating here and there.

I'm bisexual, but I'm very picky when it comes to sex. I like to cruise the park but I almost never fool around with anyone, so I don't think I'm at risk for anything.

# Lamont

Several months ago I ran into an old friend at the library. I was very excited because we hadn't seen each other in ten years! We went out for dinner and began dating after that. After a few weeks, we had sex but we didn't use a condom.

After that, he stopped answering my phone calls. So I decided to wait outside his apartment a few nights ago. He finally showed up and told why he stopped calling me. He has HIV and was afraid that he might have infected me!

I got really emotional and didn't know how to react. When I left, I had a million thoughts rushing through my mind. I remembered seeing a number on a subway poster: 1-800-TALK HIV. So I called and they gave me information about HIV, like where I can get tested. They told me I could even do a walk-in test. They told me I can get tested now but that I need to get tested again in three months to make sure the result is real. I'm going to get tested.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Edmundo

My name is Edmundo, but everyone calls me Ed. I'm 56 years old and I moved to the U.S. ten years ago from Peru. I currently live by Rego Park and most days you'll find me at the Queens Plaza Mall, but in the evening I go cruising at Flushing Park.

# Edmundo

I've smoked crack for years and sometimes I need to get high so bad that I have sex with other men at the park just to get a hit. I never think about protection, STDs, or HIV. When I need a hit, the only thing on my mind is how to get it.

The other day I saw some posters at the mall about HIV, STDs, and crack. It really hit me because the stuff on those posters sounded just like me. I guess I might be at risk. One thing for sure – I'm not ready to stop doing drugs, but I don't want to catch something, either. So I need to start thinking about using protection, but how do I start?

The poster had a phone number on it. I'm going to call and make an appointment to talk to somebody. I need to start learning about how to protect myself even when I'm high.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Wilson

I'm Wilson, 56 years old and HIV-positive since 1999. My mom is from Cuba and my dad is from Spain. Chelsea is my neighborhood and I live there with my boyfriend Robert, who also has HIV. We both love to play with other couples that are HIV-positive. We live on a fixed income and we hate to go out, so we meet people online.

# Wilson

We never use condoms. Why use them? We already have HIV so what else can happen? We're very picky who we play with so I don't worry about catching anything. Besides, condoms are such a turn off – it doesn't feel as good when I use them.

A couple of days ago I went to get lunch at GMHC and went to a workshop they had. They talked about superinfection, resistance, and other STDs. I honestly never thought about that!

At the end of the workshop we all got condoms and lubricants. I picked some ultrasensitive condoms and lubricants to see how it goes. Now I need to talk to Robert about using them. I don't want my meds to stop working. I've been doing fine with them.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



# Theresa

Hi! I'm Theresa. I'm a 62-year-old grandmother. I live by myself on 138th street in Harlem. A few weeks ago I started dating Frank. He's very special and I think we're getting serious. We are having sex.

# Theresa

Condoms and stuff like that were never my thing – I never used them. So when my grandson asked me to read some of the stuff from his sex ed class, I laughed and told him to go away. But when he left, I picked up the pamphlets and couldn't stop reading. I couldn't believe how many different STDs there are, and that I was at risk.

About a week ago I began to have pain in my stomach. I thought, "I'm just getting old – no big deal." But three days ago the pain got worse, so I went to Harlem Hospital. While I was there, I was told a bunch of stuff about HIV and STDs. I realized that the pain in my stomach could be caused by many things, maybe even one of those STDs I read about.

I'm going back to the doctor tomorrow to get my test results and I'm nervous. What if I got something? I'm going to ask her about the things I do. I want to protect myself. I want to be healthy.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Brandon

Hello, my name is Brandon. I'm 75 years old and a retired fireman. I live in Clinton Hill in Brooklyn, at the corner of Lafayette and Washington with Evan, my partner of 15 years. We are strictly monogamous – I trust him and he trusts me, so we never use protection.

About a month ago Evan got sick and had to be hospitalized. While he was in the hospital, we found out that he had HIV.

# Brandon

His doctor said I should get tested since we never used condoms. As it turned out, I also tested HIV positive. After several weeks, Evan felt better and we started having sex again.

I went to my first medical appointment at the Long Island Hospital clinic. The doctor asked me if we use condoms. I said, “No – Evan and I are both positive, so we don’t need to.” I was shocked to learn that I can become resistant to my medications if I have sex with someone who is already resistant to a medication. Meaning my medications wouldn’t work any more. My doctor strongly encouraged us to use condoms.

I know using condoms is going to be a challenge because it’s something we have never done. So we need to get used to them now. Our health is the most important things right now!

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Gwendolyn

My name is Gwendolyn. I'm a 50-year-old transgender woman. I live in Brooklyn on Eastern Parkway, right across from the Lubavitch Hasidic synagogue. I'm single but I keep myself busy, and I date a lot. I have dates almost every day of the week. Being monogamous is not for me – life is short and I want to enjoy it!



# Gwendolyn

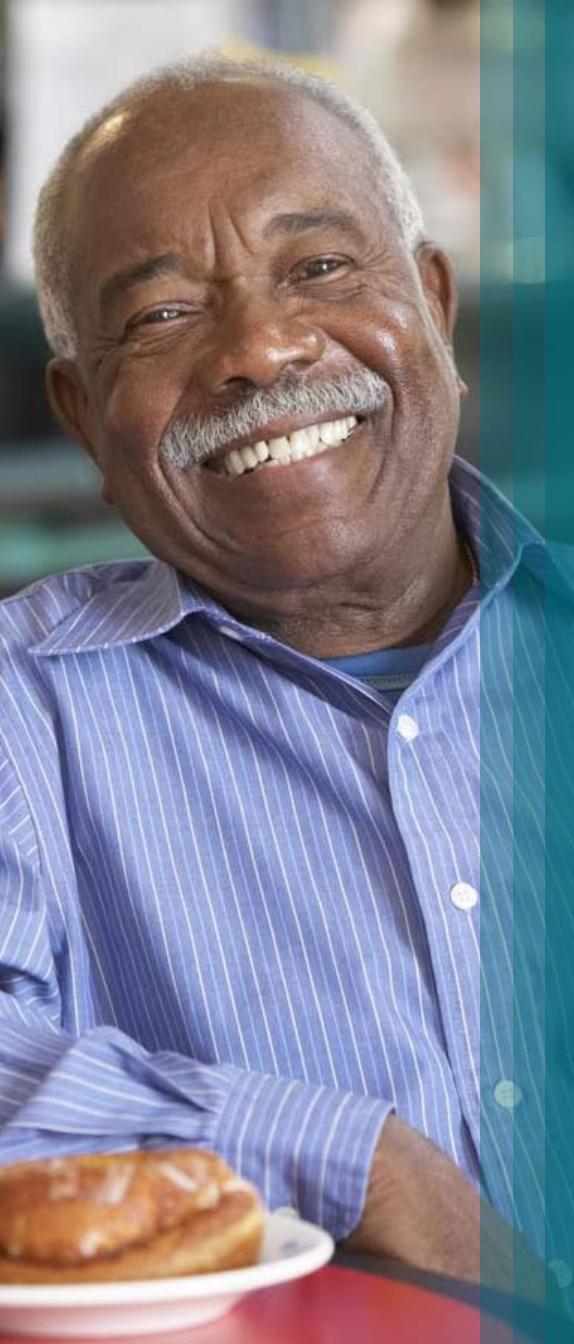
A couple of weeks ago I noticed a small sore in my groin. I thought it was an insect bite, so I didn't do anything. I don't know when or how it happened, but it went away. Then, two days ago I woke up with a very strange rash on the palms of my hands. I didn't know what to think.

I decided to go to the City Health Department on Flatbush Avenue to get a checkup. I almost fainted when they told me I had syphilis! I was treated right away, but I was scared to learn that the same things I did that led to my getting syphilis could also put me at risk for HIV.

I love the guys I date but my health comes first. I think it's time I slow down and take things more carefully. I think I should have fewer dates and try to use condoms. I don't want to get sick again – life is short, but it may be shorter if I get sick.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Gerald

Hey y'all! My name is Gerald. I'm 70 and single. I live in the Mermaid Manor Nursing Home on Coney Island Avenue in Brooklyn. I love it here, especially the view of the Atlantic Ocean. I've been here for ten years – I moved in right after I retired.

# Gerald

When it comes to sex, I meet a lot of guys online. But I'm very careful – I never answer any profiles if their HIV status is positive or “unknown.” I know all my guys are negative. I read their profiles, I'm no fool! For the past year, I've been having sex with three younger men, all in their 40s. We never use condoms – after all, they're negative so I'm not at risk for anything.

Last week in the nursing home we had a visitor from an agency called SAGE who talked to us about HIV and older adults. I was really surprised to find out that people with HIV don't always know they have it – they can be infected and have no symptoms at all!

I've been thinking a lot about what I learned that day. I realized I've been putting myself at risk. I trusted those profiles. But I don't want to get infected, so I'll be careful from now on. I guess it's time to start using condoms...

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Bertha

Hey, I'm Bertha, but my friends call me "Big B." I'm a retired teacher and in two weeks I'll be 58. I live in a three-story walk up in Pelham Bay, about a one-minute walk from the Buhre Avenue subway station. I've lived here for about 15 years. I know everything that goes on around my neighborhood!

A couple of months ago my friend Leslie invited me to a party at the Harrington Senior Center right around the corner from me. That's where I met Jimmy.

# Bertha

He was new to the neighborhood and I really liked him. We had a couple of drinks and next thing I knew I went home with him – we were both drunk. Jimmy looked so good, I didn't even think about using condoms. I haven't seen him since the party.

I saw Leslie yesterday and she told me that Jimmy had a reputation with the ladies. I never think about stuff like that. When I drink, I am so relaxed that protection is the last thing on my mind. Leslie seemed concerned and began to talk to me about HIV and STDs and mature women. She made a lot of sense and got me to think about my risk – she even suggested I carry condoms.

I think I'm going to talk to Leslie a little more about this HIV/ STD thing. I know she's my friend and I trust her. And I need to seriously think about my drinking and my risk, 'cuz I don't want to get sick. I am going to think about carrying condoms, so that next time I drink I have them right there with me.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.



## Patricia

My name is Patricia and I'm 56 years old. My family is from Puerto Rico but I was born here in the Bronx. I live on the Grand Concourse near Yankee Stadium, a few doors down from St. Raymond's Church. That's where I go to talk to my priest when I feel confused or scared about something.

# Patricia

A few weeks ago after Mass, I met Manuel. He's very handsome and we've been dating. I really enjoy his company and the sex is great. But he doesn't like to wear condoms. At my age, it's hard to date so I don't want to spoil the moment – or the relationship.

At my last GYN appointment at Bronx Lebanon hospital, my doctor asked me if I was having sex. I said yes, and to my surprise he asked if we used condoms. I told him we didn't – I know Manuel is healthy, and besides, he hates them. My doc gave me some pamphlets about HIV and older adults that included information about female condoms.

After reading them I was surprised to learn that women after menopause may have a higher risk for HIV! And to be honest, I never asked Manuel about who else he's been with. We need to talk about that before we think about having sex without a condom again.

**For more information on HIV, call:  
NYS AIDS Hotline: 800-541-AIDS  
NYC AIDS Hotline: 800-TALK-HIV**

Photos imply nothing about the health status or life history of the models.